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SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS; EB; EB/ESC/IEC (GALLOGLY)
USDOE FOR NNSA/NA-212 MENDELSON, BOLSHINSKY AND DICKERSON

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KNNP](#) [ENRG](#) [TRGY](#) [VM](#)
SUBJECT: RESPONSE FROM MFA ON PROPOSED U.S.-VIETNAM NONPROLIFERATION
ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT

THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED.

Ref: A) State 64921 B) Hanoi 1067

11. (SBU) Summary: The GVN is apparently not interested in quickly pursuing two formal agreements on nonproliferation which have been under negotiation between the Department of Energy and the Ministry of Science and Technology since 2004. MOST remains open, however, to discussion of the transfer of the unspent fuel rods at the Dalat research reactor. The prospects of further progress in this endeavor will be explored in meetings between GVN officials and a DOE team scheduled to be in Hanoi the week of October 23. End Summary.

12. (SBU) Embassy Hanoi received a diplomatic note from the MFA in response to the Embassy's diplomatic note of April 26 (Refs A and B). The MFA note (full text in paragraph 3) was in response to an Embassy note that had conveyed two draft agreements to the GVN for its consideration: the "Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Facilitate the Provision of Assistance for Nonproliferation Purposes" (a government-to-government Agreement), as well as the "Agreement between the Department of Energy of the United States of America and the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Concerning Cooperation in the Area of Prevention of Proliferation of Nuclear Materials and Technologies" (the implementing agreement).

13. (SBU) Begin text of note.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Socialist Republic of Vietnam

No: 424/NG-TCQT

Hanoi, September 28, 2006

Embassy of the United States of America, Hanoi:

The Department of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America in Vietnam and referring to the Embassy's diplomatic note No. 00404/06 dated 26 April, 2006, has the honor to inform the following:

It is the consistent policy of the Vietnamese Government, which receives full acknowledgement and high appreciation from the international community, to promote the general and complete disarmament, support the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destructions (WMD), and advocate the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Vietnam has acceded to and strictly implemented international

treaties on WMD such as the Convention on Biological Weapons (BWC, 1980), the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT, 1982), the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT, 1996), and the Convention on Chemical Weapons (CWC, 1998).

In that spirit, Vietnam welcomes the recent proposal of the America on the "Agreement to Facilitate the Provision of Assistance for Nonproliferation Purposes" and shall request the assistance in this area as the need arises.

The Department of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States of America in Vietnam the assurances of its highest consideration.

End text of note.

¶4. (SBU) Following receipt of the MFA note, ESTH Assistant followed up with MFA International Organizations Department Desk Officer Nguyen Hai Luu to clarify the meaning of the phrase "...shall request the assistance in this area as the need arises." Luu said that this can be understood to mean that, at the moment, the Government of Vietnam does not need the USG's assistance and thus does not feel compelled to pursue the two draft agreements. Contacts with MFA officials yielded a similar interpretation.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: The transfer of the unspent fuel rods at the Dalat research reactor could be implemented through an existing trilateral U.S.-Russia-International Atomic Energy Agency contract. This requires approval of the Prime Minister, an action that senior officials of the Ministry of Science and Technology have repeatedly assured us (since March 2006) is forthcoming. The transfer of spent fuel rods, however, does not fall under this contract and would require agreements such as those proposed to the GVN. The GVN may assume that the spent rods pose limited risk and, hence, do not

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require the additional effort of getting the two draft bilateral agreements negotiated, reviewed and signed -- a process that could take a considerable additional period of time. END COMMENT.

MARINE